



## **Retired US Army Colonel on Ukraine, Taiwan and the state of the US Empire**

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**Zain Raza (ZR):** Thank you guys for tuning in today and welcome to another episode of The Source. I'm your host, Zain Raza. And today we'll be discussing US foreign policy with a guest who has a long history within the US government, particularly the military. To read out the biography would take me the entire session, so I'm just going to list a few highlights. Lawrence Wilkerson is a retired colonel who served in the US Army for 31 years. While he was in the Army, he was a member of the faculty of the US Naval War College from 1987 to 1989; a special assistant to General Colin Powell when he was the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1989 to 1983; the Deputy Director of the US Marine Corps War College at Quantico, Virginia, from 93 to 97 and his last position for the US government was as Chief of Staff to then-Secretary of State Colin Powell from 2000 to 2005. He's now a distinguished professor of government and public policy at the College of William & Mary. Lawrence Wilkerson, welcome to the show.

**Lawrence Wilkerson (LW):** Thanks for having me on.

**ZR:** Let us begin with the situation in Taiwan. Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, despite warnings from Beijing, recently visited Taiwan. China responded with military drills that are still ongoing and are simulating land attacks and long range airstrikes around Taiwan. What is the United States doing in Taiwan and how do you assess the situation?

**LW:** I think it's a graphic example of what I call the disconnects in US foreign policy, especially US foreign policy/ security policy. I don't think the president, for example, wanted her to take that delegation to Taipei. I think he tried to dissuade her. He was unsuccessful because this is a woman who increasingly goes her own way. I don't know if it's senility- I suspect, or some of that- or it's just the kind of person she is. But I think she's exactly the wrong kind of person to be carrying out American foreign policy. Let me hasten to add that

those are my colleagues in the military and elsewhere who lately have said to me, Hey, the Congress has no business in foreign policy. I say, you're full of it; read the Constitution. The Congress has as much responsibility for US foreign policy as the executive. The executive just as that, he's the executive. The Congress is the legislative branch. And they got Ronald Reagan out of Iran, for example, and almost got him impeached with their legislation with regard to support of the Contras against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua; the Iran-Contra affair, which wrapped up with that, too. So Congress does have a responsibility there, but it should be a responsible responsibility, not irresponsible. And Nancy Pelosi is irresponsible. This was not a very smart trip.

**ZR:** Some analysts say that we are currently in an Indo-Pacific Cold War in which the US is encircling China with the support of its allies in the region that include Taiwan, Japan and Australia. Last year, for example, the US and Britain announced it would provide Australia with the technology and capability to develop and deploy nuclear powered submarines. What role is the US playing in the region and what impact would it have on global security as well as the economy, especially considering how China and the US are intertwined if developments keep moving along this path?

**LW:** On the edges of this policy is a sign of desperation. First of all, China has become the hegemon in that region of the world. There's no question about it. Whether it's the negative connotation of that hegemony or a positive one, it remains to be seen, I think. Under Xi Jinping it seems to be tending towards the negative, which is what forces Australia and others like Australia into coming back into the fold, if you will, with regard to America. But we have lost hegemony there. We're desperately trying to reestablish that. And one of the ways we've been trying for some time, as it slipped away from us, was to encircle China. If you or an American citizen in China suddenly moved into the northern states of Mexico, you'd have some idea about what China feels about our attitude in the Pacific. We have surrounded them. Most formidable of all, we have made an ally at least somewhat of India, China's principal antagonist in the region, if you will. They still have border wars and border skirmishes. So that's the first part of the policy, it seems like it's somewhat in desperation. Reach out and form all these new groups and so forth in order to counter China. The second part of it is Taiwan and the South China Sea in general. And the unsettled matter there, which we are now disturbing majorly with people like my old boss, Richard Haass, at the Council on Foreign Relations, saying we need strategic clarity rather than strategic ambiguity, which is, in my view, just stupid. Strategic ambiguity has worked for some time and it'll continue to work. And it simply says, we recognize there's only one China. Beijing is the capital of that one China. And that in exchange for that, the diplomacy associated with it and so forth, in exchange for that, China will not use force against Taiwan. That worked for a long time. Ever since Zhou Enlai, Nixon and Ambassador Freeman and Kissinger met and Jimmy Carter codified it later on. So it's worked and it could work for another decade or two, and that's a decade or two without major war. Unfortunately I'll now come to the third point. The third point is starting with Russia, but China always looming in the background. The United States

needs a new Cold War. And it needs a new Cold War because it has become an oligarchy in the sense of defense contracting and those associated industries. They make billions. Look at what they're making off the Ukraine conflict right now. We could bring the Ukraine conflict to an end. All we'd have to do is sit down and negotiate, eat a little crow on our side maybe, and bring it to an end. We need to do that, but we won't, because this is very, very lucrative for so many people. I don't know if you saw, but last year, the defense contractors, the top six dumped so much money into the leading congressmen's PACs and other entities that if you look at the money they got already out of Ukraine and the money they put into the Congress, about \$10.2 million, it's a 450,000% return on their money. You can't beat that. And so you're going to have more war and you're going to have more Ukraines. And you're going to want a Cold War.

**ZR:** We'll get to Ukraine in a bit. But what alternative policies do you recommend in the Indo-Pacific region that could actually create security, stability and harmony in the region and prevent the situation from spiraling out of control? Because we are talking about nuclear weapons here, do you see any alternative way that could de-escalate the situation?

**LW:** I do. And let me address the nuclear weapons and then get to that. Nuclear weapons are a particular problem right now. In fact, I would say they are as existential a problem as is the climate crisis. And that's because we've let all treaties go. The only treaty left- and it's a vestige- and Putin has said indirectly that he's probably not willing to talk to us about extending it further is New START. We've gotten rid of them all; Open Skies, the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, the INF Treaty [Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces], the ABM Treaty [Anti Ballistic Missile Treaty]. We did that. We forced this world to face a new threat that some would say is not very far from what we had in 1962 with regard to Cuba, or 61 to 62 with regard to Berlin, when we actually helped the Germans, the East Germans build the "Schandmauer", the wall of shame, the Berlin Wall. We helped to do that because otherwise we couldn't stop the people flowing out of East Germany into West Germany. A very strategic situation. And one most Americans don't realize, we came very close to a nuclear exchange there. We're back in that kind of territory again with no arms control whatsoever. That's serious. And Taiwan is a serious part of that, because every war game I've ever participated in that featured Taiwan as the backdrop, we wound up going nuclear at the end of the game because there was no other way for the two powers to influence one another beyond the attrition that had happened up to that point. In for a penny in for a pound, then you go for nuclear weapons and then it's all over. So we don't need that to happen. How can we stop that from happening? We need to recognize that China is in fact, and I use this term not in a pejorative sense, in a recognition of reality sense they are the hegemon in that region of the world. Now, Japan stands as a stark opponent of that hegemony, if you will. And under people like Abe, who was just assassinated, unfortunately- a rare thing for Japan, but it did happen. Japan can be a stalwart with respect to China in terms of it becoming too big for its pants, so to speak. But we don't need anything more than that, in my view. What we need out there and what we need indeed globally is what I call the

three C's. We need comity, cooperation and collaboration. And it's because of nuclear weapons and the climate crisis. We're looking at the latter. Being something like, Okay, you want to be like the dinosaurs. You know, the earth will be here for four and a half billion more years, so it runs into the sun and burns out; that's what people tell me who know the science. But we might not be. We could very well go the way of the dinosaurs and the climate and what's happening right now, which I'm very much involved in and know the science of to a certain extent, is something that could do that to us. There is nothing anywhere in anybody's books, except some of these crazy religionists that says the earth will have human life forever, or at least for the four and a half billion years before it goes. And nothing, nothing guarantees that. So I'm really worried about that long term prospect. It's a profound crisis that we need to be dealing with. And I come back to my recipe for the Far East as well as for the Globe, and that is we need to cooperate. The great powers particularly, I'll call them Near-Peer powers. What we're doing is going from the US being promising to perry, first among equals, if you will, to being perries into perries, we're all equals now; when it comes to China and when it comes to Europe and when it comes to maybe Brazil and India and some other countries, too, Japan. We need to work together because we don't we're going to perish together. It's that simple. And that recipe would work in the Pacific as a good place to start, if you will.

**ZR:** I would like to touch on the other foreign policy that you've already briefly mentioned, the war in Ukraine. The war was expected by the Russian elite to be over swiftly. Russia was unable to take Kiev and then focussed its efforts on the eastern regions of Ukraine in Donetsk and Luhansk. In your assessment, what objectives did the Russian elite focus on in the beginning and how have they evolved over time?

**LW:** I think this is one of the great guilt complexes, if you will. That's not the right phrase. It's one of the tremendous letdowns. And there have been many of late of the Western media. They have been portraying this conflict improperly. Even lying about it, willfully in some cases in London and Washington in particular, all along, since February 24th. And actually before that. John Mearsheimer, you may know, has been an outspoken critic of the idea that Russia is to blame for all this. NATO expansion, more than anything else, was to blame for it. Imagine if someone had come, as I said, to Mexico, China, and suddenly had decided that, Oh, well, I think I'll make Texas a member of my alliance and Texas might come in. You have a real problem there with what we did to start this. So why is it continuing? Because, in essence, Russia has won. And I would say they've won in a very combination of Sun Tzu, Clausewitzian-style. They feinted on Kiev, they got everybody's attention on Kiev. They even got by overseen to look like they were coming down from the north, as we did in Iraq when we tried to put troops in Turkey. This was very, very well finessed by the Russians. And we could say it was bloody, but it was bloody because that's the way the Russians do war. And if you're going to use artillery and tanks and so forth, it is going to be bloody. And now we've added high tech to it, so it is getting even bloodier. But they've won, really. They got what they want. Right now the only thing sustaining Ukraine in its continued fight, other than I'll

admit the courage of their individual fighters, is our help. Especially our high tech help, like HIMARS, the artillery that just devastates everything it falls on. This is very dangerous. It's extremely dangerous because we're making Putin in for a penny in for a pound. And we're making Putin take actions that are going to haunt us later on and haunt Europe big time. And I don't just mean the gas and the cutting off of the gas and oil and so forth. I mean, that Russia is a part of Europe. It has always been a part of Europe from the Urals west anyway. Look at the Rand McNally map, look at any atlas. This is part of Europe. And to have this happening; it's just unconscionable that the Europeans have allowed this to happen. It's not unhistorical because every time Russia has tried to open to Europe, whether it's the Russian court speaking French only or whether it's Peter actually coming incognito and traveling through Europe, they've tried to make amends and to accommodate Europe and to be a part of Europe and each time they've been rebuffed. And the last couple of times have been led by yours truly, the United States of America. This has got to stop, especially if we come back to what I said before, comity, cooperation and collaboration. It's absolutely essential for nuclear weapons and the climate. We can't keep doing this. So right now, the onus, in my view, is on Biden. You have got to talk and you've got to be willing to eat a little crow and you've got to be willing to convince your European friends who are now hell bent to be members of NATO, that will not last. You heard it here first. That will not last when this is over. Norway, Finland and others are going to look around and say, What the hell did our government do to us? That's what's going to happen. We need a European security architecture. We need it to be independent of NATO, we need to stand NATO down; been trying to do this for 30 years, but the United States has stood in the way. Every time we identify troops for the European security architecture, the Europeans would say, Well, if there's an emergency, we'll use them in our architecture. And we say, No, you can't, because they belong to NATO. So we killed it. For 30 years we have killed that sort of thing. We got to stop. This comity, collaboration, cooperation means no one is hegemon over other people's business. I mean, that's the reality of it. Power and the realities of power notwithstanding, they don't line up for that sort of thing today. There's just too many people out there with power. And when you have that kind of situation, you need cooperation, particularly when you're confronting the kind of crises we are today. Now, others would say students of great power rivalry, students of international relations would say, Oh, that's the worst possible, most dangerous world, with a lot of powers that are somewhat equal; a lot of peer powers is the phrase we use today. I say, yeah, that might have been true in the past because they'll jockey around till one of them beats the hell out of all the rest and becomes the hegemon. That's not what we need today. And if we can't figure that out, you know, a scientist said this the other day, very smart words: We are the first generation in human history to know what we need to do and to have the technology to do it; and he was referring to the climate crisis. The question is, will we have the wisdom to do it? It's looking increasingly like the answer to that question is a negative, and that's a disaster.

**ZR:** Talking about haunting Europe, our politicians are almost on a daily basis telling us that this is going to be a very harsh winter. Already a number of cities in Germany are doing energy saving measures and saving on electricity and stuff. All of this is part and parcel about

the sanctions that were implemented that experts say are now backfiring already, whereas the Russian ruble is going through the roof. How do you assess the sanctions? Are they working and will they have a long term impact on Russia's efforts in Ukraine?

**LW:** First in general, sanctions are generally stupid. They just are. I don't care what Meghan O'Sullivan says about them or all these people who pontificated about sanctions; they're nuts. They hurt the people you don't want to hurt. And don't hurt the people you do want to hurt, more often than not. Just look at the children we killed in Iraq where there were sanctions, for example. So sanctions in general are not the way any power should be dealing with the world, especially not in this world today. Second, sanctions- and this is another general comment about sanctions- sanctions from the United States, which now blanket the globe, are essentially causing the rest of the world, in many cases very powerful elements in that world, to band together and to think about and to begin to implement counters. And what do I mean by that? I mean to invent systems that would replace the current banking system, principally based on US power, to actually come up with currencies or alternatives to currencies that will combat the power of the dollar. Charles de Gaulle once said the most pernicious weapon that America fielded was the power of its currency, in the IMF and other places, I mean he knew. He'd had it wielded against him, in London of course. But that's the world getting together. Three billion plus people right now are sick and tired of American sanctions because they've been under them at one time or another. Talk to the Iranians, talk to the Cubans, talk to almost half the world in one way or another. And the sanctions are influencing. What you just said about backfiring with regard to Russia; yes, they are backfiring because what they're doing, in essence, is causing things to happen in Russia that are supportive of Putin staying in power and happen in Europe that are not supportive of continued support for NATO. I mean, it's crazy what we're doing with these sanctions. I don't know how you get out of it though, because I was very close to the process at OFAC, the Overseas Finance Assets Control Office in the US government. You couldn't unwind the sanctions we have today short of 24 to 28 months even on Iran. That's what's so puzzling about what's happening right now with the agreement trying to get the JCPOA [The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action] re-energized. I wouldn't blame the Iranians for saying, you know, middle finger to you because they know the one thing they want more than anything else is some sort of substantive sanctions relief. It takes two years or more just to unwind in legislation the sanctions, because we've made a labyrinth of them. We've made an unbelievable legislative mess out of these sanctions; it is part congressional mandate, it is part actual statute, it's part executive order, you name it. There's some of it in OFAC and in the sanctions business. Just getting out of this is going to be a nightmare. We needed to start five years ago to try and unwind this and get out of it, particularly with things like Cuba. Look at Cuba. We've been blockaded them. An act of war for over a half a century. They just had an oil explosion, you probably know, down there. And it's just devastating right now. And I'm waiting, I'm waiting for Biden to say, Oh, you know, even my president went to Iran in 2003, I think it was when the earthquake hit bomb and killed 30,000 people or so, we went to them and we gave them everything we could from search dogs to hospital trucks and everything. Why aren't we doing that right now with Cuba?

This is crazy. This is not the kind of world we should live in. Sanctions are a huge mistake. They never benefit the sanctioner, they always hurt the people you don't want to hurt. They do not hurt the people you want to hurt. And by and large, they create an animosity in the world that will come back to haunt you eventually.

**ZR:** You already mentioned the role of NATO expansionism in Europe. Just on Tuesday, President Biden signed documents endorsing Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO. Finland shares a 1340 kilometer border with Russia. Now, all parliaments of NATO members still have to ratify their membership. How do you view this development? And, you know, the media here in Germany, especially even our politicians, tout this line that Russia has military ambitions beyond Ukraine. Will NATO hinder these ambitions and is there any validity to this argument?

**LW:** I think the argument is nonsense. I think it could be a self-fulfilling prophecy, though, if we do what we're doing now and continue to do it. And Putin conceives it the way he might conceive it; then we might make a belligerent out of him. But I don't think that he has any desire right now, except to what we say is our desire with regard to NATO, his desires with regard to the CSTO [Collective Security Treaty Organization]. And we say the CSTO is nothing, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, is nothing but Russia. Well, NATO's nothing but Washington about half of the time. So, you know, fair play. What's good for the goose is good for the gander. But he wants to keep NATO out of his territory. That's why he went into Ukraine. Because we were going to make- my president wanted to please him, George W. Bush and with the president of Georgia standing beside him in a public square, said, Georgia would be a member of NATO. You remember what happened then; Putin invaded. And now he owns basically a couple of provinces in Georgia. This is crazy. It was clear what Putin would do. Anybody would do it. I'm not a fan of Putin. I don't like Vladimir Putin. But I can tell you I would have done it had I been him. This is a great power in the way it acts. And Russia has the trappings of a great power as long as it has 11 time zones and such massive strategic depth. And it is an Asia and a European power and it has those filling stations. You name it, it's a country to be reckoned with. And I didn't even mention it has 6000 nuclear warheads. So you've got to deal with that. You've got to deal with that. And you don't deal with it by saying that they are a vestige of the Soviet Union. They're not. They're not. And the vestige that they're showing of the Soviet Union was promoted by and provoked by us, Washington; with London's help.

**ZR:** A string of explosions followed this week at the Russian air base in Crimea. The cause is yet unknown. However President Zelensky of Ukraine said it thereafter, and I quote here: "The war in Ukraine began with Crimea and it must end with its liberation". And later on he goes on to say: "Crimea is Ukraine and we will never give it up". Do you think it's possible for Ukraine to take Crimea? And part of the question, how does Zelensky get this idea that he could take on the entire Russian army by himself?

**LW:** Here's where you come into what I think was the greatest danger of NATO expansion; notwithstanding the 24th February invasion of Ukraine. The greatest danger was what we will provoke with those who have abandoned NATO requirements; democracy, rule of law, institutions and so forth. Those are all requirements to be members of NATO. We waived those. Put that up to Bill Clinton. Bill Clinton started that process. Bill Clinton is responsible for that process. So we let countries in NATO who are going to do this to us. Countries like Poland, for example. Oh, all my Polish-American friends are screaming right now. I would never have let Poland, the battleground of Europe, and coveting so many other things other than what Poland currently encompasses, be a member of NATO because what does it say? An attack on one is an attack on all. You take that Iowa pig farmer, you take that guy out in Indiana who right now is voting for abortion being banned forever because he's such an upright Christian. You take those people and you say, Do you understand what you've just done? You have said that for Estonia, for Montenegro, for Poland, you are going to risk nuclear war. What do you mean, he's going to say back to you or she's going to scream at you. No, you don't understand Article five?! An attack on one is an attack on all. That means you were willing to put your nuclear umbrella over Montenegro. Or in this case, eventually we thought over Ukraine. These are people with age-old grievances against Russia in particular. These are people who want their territory back. However, that territory might be a thousand years in the past. Go back to the Balkans conflict; that had a Serb stand in front of a lieutenant colonel, US army type. The lieutenant colonel said, What is this all about? The Serb explained to him his equivalent in the Serbian military, it was about a thousand year old grudge. Well, the Americans have taken aback. What? You're killing people over a thousand [unclear]. Yes. Okay. That's what we're talking about. And now we are guaranteeing with nuclear weapons their security. And Zelensky is a perfect example of what I'm talking about.

**ZR:** Switching onto the next foreign policy subject. There's been a recent escalation in Israel, in Palestine. Israel has bombarded Gaza and many children and women have died. And settlement expansion keeps going on, whereas the European countries, as well as the United States, are unable to take any action on this front. How do you assess the situation in the region and what can be done to contribute to peace there?

**LW:** The situation in the Levant really troubles me greatly and it has for many years. I think it was perpetrated majorly by the invasion of Iraq in 2003. So there is another blame you can put at the feet of Washington and London too, willing lackey in that case. Right now from water; Syria has the worst drought in a thousand years. You might as well say the worst drought in history for Syria or for that land. You have the Marsh Arabs in Iraq virtually gone because they have no water left. The Tigris and Euphrates is a drizzle, a drip down there. The reeds are drying up the swamps that they've lived in for years are going away. You have Lebanon, you know the case of Lebanon- they are a basket case right now and no fault of their own in reality, because the people having orchestrated this situation live in Jerusalem and elsewhere. They don't want an economic competitor. Why did they bomb the targets they bombed in the last conflict with Lebanon? They bombed economic targets. Because they saw

Lebanon coming back to a certain extent and they didn't want any competition. And they want the oil and the gas; that might belong to the Palestinians, might belong to the Lebanese. So this is Israel's current predatory state; militarily, economically and otherwise. So you got a situation there that is so fraught for problems and danger and ultimately producing some of the greatest numbers of refugees in the history of the world. We just did a simulation at the Center for Naval Analysis. By 2065, we had one sort of worst case analysis. But the more I look at it, the less I think it was worst case, where by 2065 you had half a billion to a billion refugees in the world. Think about that for a minute. And people say to me today, Oh, that couldn't happen. And I say, you know how many we have today already? No, how many? 178 million. What? Yes, 178 million, either internally displaced or externally displaced. And oh, by the way, my American friend, many of them are because of actions we've perpetrated. Like the Iraq war or Syria or Libya. So this situation with refugees and with people, especially coming out of the global south, starting with Southwest Asia, is going to get, not by a mid-century, but is getting right now to be untenable. Water is going. Many of the African countries can't find water. If you look at Eritrea and Ethiopia, for example, they would not have made it through the last couple of decades without Iowa pig farmers and corn farmers. Now, when Trump came in and killed all that and corn started- 94% of US corn goes to ethanol now, which is an utter stupidity based on politics and money- it is not going there. So where was the food to replace that? What was coming from Ukraine and Russia, as was much of northern Africa, the rim of northern Africa and so forth, getting their food from there. I understand that they're renegotiating those agreements and they're trying to get the food flowing again, but this is what I'm talking about. We do not need to be doing this right now. What we need to be doing is cooperating. Otherwise, we're going to really devastate this planet and the climate is going to help us do it ten times over.

**ZR:** We're turning back to Israel and Palestine. What do you think is the end goal of Israel in that region? I mean, continued with the settlement expansion and the regular conflict that we see emerging where Gaza gets bombed and rockets get fired on the other end. What is the end goal here and what is US foreign policy or is there foreign policy in that region? Because it seems it's been going the same script for the last 30 to 40 years.

**LW:** When George W. Bush met with, Ariel Sharon, who was then prime minister of Israel in the Oval Office the first time, or the second time- might have been the second time- he essentially told him that the policy that had been in effect for 40 plus years had been a total failure. So what did he recommend replacing it? Where Sharon was kind of taking aback because he realized he'd just been given carte blanche. But he didn't remain taken aback for very long. He quickly flowed into that gap and essentially said, this is what we would like to do. And George W. Bush said, Well, the past is not work, so do it. I mean, I'm really condensing that conversation, but that's really what happened. Colin Powell, the Secretary of State, didn't like that at all and got the president at least to agree that he could keep working on the roadmap, go to Ramallah and meet with Arafat. But every time Powell would try something, Dick Cheney would cut the limb that Powell had crawled out of right at the root.

So it was over. And it was turned over to them, Tel Aviv, now Jerusalem. It's been doing that ever since. I had a student at George Washington University who was in the IDF [Israeli Defence Forces]. He participated in Operation Cast Lead. You may remember one of the first. At a briefing of his battalion he was told the object of that operation was to kill every Palestinian inside. It didn't matter who they were or what they were. They needed to teach the Palestinians in Gaza a lesson. That was the operating, standard operating procedure. That's what they've been doing ever since. Every time you shoot a rocket, we will kill 1300 of you. Men, women, children, doesn't matter. And you'll kill two or three of us. We will live with those odds. And we will eventually eradicate you. And I'm convinced that that's their ultimate goal. Eradication and or apartheid. Now they're very, very close to apartheid in the entire region. They are already at apartheid in the West Bank, to a certain extent in Jerusalem, certainly in Gaza, it's a special kind of apartheid. You own it all. We'll just keep you there and we won't let you do anything. And we'll come in periodically and kill you, especially if you let the more active agents in Hamas do something to us, or the Islamic Jihad or whatever. That's Israel's policy; and eradication is not too strong a word.

**ZR:** So putting everything into context, what we're talking about, my last question is how would you summarize the state of the US empire? Even if I can call that.

**LW:** Oh, you can. 850 bases in the world, military bases when the rest of the world combined, including Russia and China, has less than 90. Oh, we're an empire. We would make Rome's emperors at the height of the Western Empire in particular, shudder. We are so powerful, it's pitiful. But it's going. It's going, it's ebbing, it's running out fast. And if we don't figure out a way to find an off ramp into this kind of world I was talking about comity, collaboration, cooperation, we're going out catastrophically. That's what I would like not to see. I would like to see a British empire. You know, the sun never sets on her empire; 70 years later, they are a middling power, as Jeremy Greenstock called them. Well, I don't think with 300 million people and 3000 miles from sea to sea that the United States will ever be a middling power. But it's going to be a peer power. And it may even be one of the lesser peers, particularly if China keeps on the trajectory it's on, which is a big question too though- the demographics alone. So I just want to see us go out not with a bang, but with a plan, a strategic approach to becoming a cooperative, collaborative member of the world. I don't think we'll go that way. I think we'll go catastrophically. The exception there could be if we do wake up to the profound nature of the climate crisis and begin to understand that we have to cooperate and collaborate to meet that threat. Because we can't meet it by ourselves. This is the first challenge that is all encompassing that America cannot meet. It simply cannot. The rest of the world can kill us and vice versa. So if we don't get together, that's the one thing I think that could pull the world together and pull the United States into some sort of sensible foreign and security policy. And I hope it does. But I am not expecting it.

**ZR:** Lawrence Wilkerson, thank you so much for your time today.

**LW:** Thanks for having me.

**ZR:** And thank you guys for tuning in today. Don't forget to donate to our channel if you like this content. We don't take any money from corporations, billionaires, advertisement companies or governments. We only depend on you for our journalism to continue. And also, don't forget to subscribe to our channel by clicking on the subscription bell below and joining our alternative channels on Rumble and Telegram. I'm your host, Zain Raza, see you guys next time.

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